BRITISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARABIC STUDIES

BERNARD LEWIS

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In the richly varied history of British contributions to human knowledge, no chapter is more fascinating than that which Dr. Bernard Lewis has outlined here, for he describes how British travellers and scholars have studied the life and literature of the Arab countries for the past eight hundred years, and how their enthusiasm for the great achievements of Arabic culture has strengthened the traditional friendship between the Arab and British peoples.

The story is full of human as well as academic interest, adventure and romance going hand-in-hand with scholarship, but it was never told completely until Dr. Lewis told it in Arabic, in a series of talks broadcast recently to the Middle East by the B.B.C. As Lecturer in Islamic History at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London University, and author of *Turkey To-day* and *The Origins of Ismā'ilism*, Dr. Lewis is fully qualified to speak on the subject. The publication of his talks in English will be welcomed by many readers besides those who are already familiar with the remarkable work of such great English Arabists as Bedwell and Pococke, Sir Richard Burton and Wilfred Scawen Blunt.

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BRITISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARABIC STUDIES

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With a Preface by

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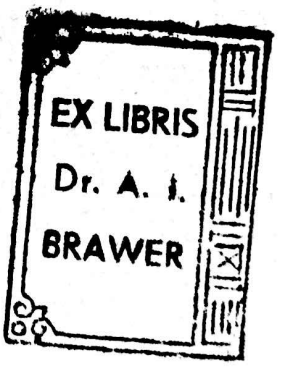
Illustrated



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PREFACE

AMONG the most fascinating chapters in the varied history of British scholarship is that connected with the study of Islam, and in particular of Arabic, the language of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. Yet this story, rich in human as well as more formal academic interest, had never been told in its completeness until the British Broadcasting Corporation invited Dr. Bernard Lewis to prepare a series of talks on the subject for transmission in their Arabic programmes.

These talks, which were subsequently published in *The Arab Listener* and reproduced widely in the Arabic press, aroused such widespread interest that it seemed desirable to issue an English version of them, so that a wider public might become informed of the truly remarkable achievements of eight centuries of British studies of Islam and of the Arabic language and literature.

The friendship of the British and Arab peoples is traditional and of long standing. Many and varied factors have contributed to the maintenance of this happy relationship: certainly prominent, perhaps chief, among them may be reckoned that ideal of honest and sympathetic appraisal of the truly great achievements of Arabic culture which has inspired generations of British orientalists.

If the story unfolded in these pages may justly serve as a cause for pride, its lesson is still more one of admonition and encouragement. Friendship of peoples, as of individuals, when based on the strong foundations of mutual understanding and respect, is too precious a heritage lightly to be squandered or easily to be destroyed. It is the solemn responsibility of this generation of British scholars to see to it that their share in preserving and enriching this friendship shall be no less than that of their predecessors. It is the responsibility of the British public to see to it that these labours of scholarship shall be lightened by sympathetic understanding and support.

A. J. ARBERRY

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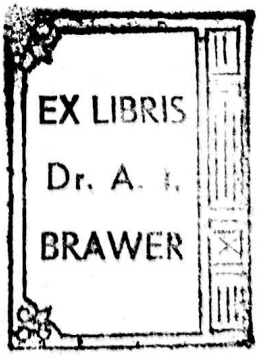

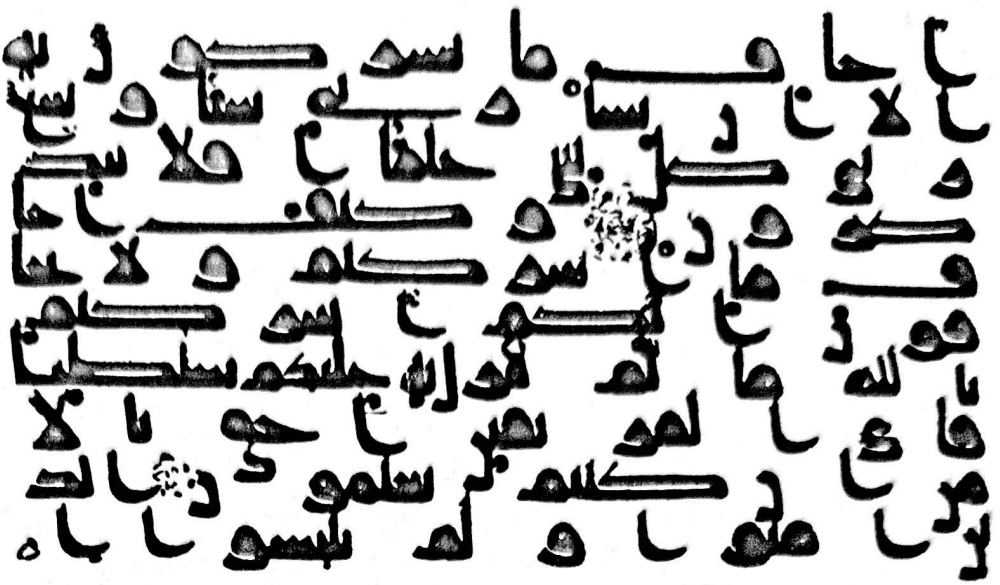

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A Kufic fragment of the Qur'ān, probably ninth century. Vowels are marked in red according to the very primitive system. (*Reduced.*)

BRITISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARABIC STUDIES

I. THE MIDDLE AGES

FOR a long time it was the opinion of scholars that the first important cultural contacts between Islam and the Franks resulted from the Crusades. It is true that the Crusades were the first occasion when the Arab East and the Christian West were brought into close association, and some cultural exchanges must have taken place. Modern historical research, however, has shown that these exchanges were limited in scope and effect, as might indeed have been expected from the predominantly military character of the episode. It was through another channel that Arabic thought and science reached the West in general and England in particular.

After their conquest of North Africa the victorious Arabs swept on into Europe, and for a long time colonized two important areas in the Mediterranean zone. In Spain and Sicily they established a flourishing civilization far in advance of anything to be found in Christian lands at the time—one which did not fail to impress their Christian contemporaries. Even after the Christian reconquest of these lands Arab learning continued to flourish for a while, and Christian kings spoke Arabic and supported Arab scholars. From an early date the higher culture of the Arabs began to penetrate to the lands of the Franks. Arabic-speaking Christians in Spain served as an important channel of influence, and the Arabic-speaking Jews of Spain and Sicily, who shared a common language—Hebrew—with their Frankish co-religionists, also helped greatly in the diffusion of Arabic learning in the West. We may mention particularly the Spanish-Jewish philosopher and scholar Abraham b. Ezra of Toledo, who visited London in 1158 and 1159 and taught there for some time. The Englishman Thomas Brown served as a judge in Sicily and is mentioned in Arabic documents as al-Qā'id Brūn.

In the twelfth century scholars from the north, and particularly from England, began to visit the Arab universities of Spain in search of knowledge. The first and greatest of these was the Englishman Adelard of Bath, the pioneer of Arab learning in the West. In the first quarter of the twelfth century Adelard travelled extensively in

Spain and Syria, and studied Arabic and Arab science. He translated many Arabic books into Latin for the use of his Christian contemporaries, and on his return served as tutor to the future King Henry II of England, to whom he dedicated one of his books. His chief original work, the *Natural Questions*, is in the form of a dialogue between Adelard and his nephew. The nephew had studied in the universities of the Franks while Adelard was among the Arabs, and the discussions consist of a comparison of the two doctrines. Adelard says in his preface, 'I shall plead the cause of the Arabs, not my own'. He insists at length on the superiority of the Arab method, and helped greatly by his own influence to spread it in the West. He translated a number of Arabic works on astronomy and mathematics, thus furthering the development of these sciences in Europe.

Adelard was followed to Spain by many other Englishmen. Robert of Chester, also in the twelfth century, studied mathematics and translated Arabic books. An interesting character is Daniel of Morley, who, as he tells us himself, was dissatisfied with the Frankish universities and went to Spain to 'seek the wiser philosophers of the universe'. He returned to England with a large collection of books, which found many readers. Michael Scot, in the thirteenth century, studied in Sicily and mastered the Arabic and Hebrew languages. He translated the works of Aristotle from Arabic, several of which thus became known for the first time in the West. He also translated the Arabic commentators of Aristotle, and wrote a number of books on astrology and alchemy.

The work of these and other adventurous Englishmen who visited the lands of the Arabs was of great cultural value. It was thanks to their efforts that the philosophic and scientific achievements of the Arabs became known in England and the West, and an important step forward was taken in European cultural development. The influence of their translations and original works was tremendous, and among those who were deeply affected by Arabic learning we may mention the great English philosopher Roger Bacon and the poets Chaucer and Lydgate. It is worthy of note that the first book ever printed in England, the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers* (1477), was based on an Arabic original, namely the *Kitab Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsin al-kilam* كتاب مختار الحكم ومحاسن الكلم compiled in 1053 by the Egyptian Amīr Mubashshir b. Fātik. The Arabic text has not been printed, but a manuscript of it is still to be found in Holland. The

book consists of a collection of philosophic quotations and proverbs, and was once very popular in the East. It was translated into many European languages.

The debt owed by medieval Europe to its Arab contemporaries and their Western interpreters is twofold. In the first place, it was from the Arabs that Europe received a large part of the precious heritage of Greek thought and science, which, while lost in the West, had been preserved and extended by the Arabs. In the second place, Europe learnt from the Arabs a new method—one which placed reason above authority, and advocated independent research and experiment. It was the learning of these two lessons that played so great a part in bringing to an end the Middle Ages, and in heralding the Renaissance and the birth of the new Europe. In the transmission of these lessons English scholars had an important share. It is an historical tragedy that just at this time the Arabs began to forget the very things that they had taught Europe, and had to learn them again many centuries later.

We may conclude by hearing Adelard of Bath himself address his nephew on the method he learnt in Spain. It should be remembered that this was written eight hundred years ago.

'I, with reason for my guide, have learned one thing from my Arab teachers, you, something different; dazzled by the outward show of authority you wear a head-stall. For what else should we call authority but a head-stall? Just as brute animals are led by the head-stall where one pleases, without seeing why or where they are being led, and only follow the halter by which they are held, so many of you, bound and fettered as you are by a low credulity, are led into danger by the authority of writers. . . . Reason has been given to individuals that, with it as chief judge, distinction may be drawn between the true and the false. . . . We must first search after reason, and when it has been found, and not until then, authority, if added to it, may be received. Authority by itself can inspire no confidence in the philosopher, nor ought it to be used for such a purpose.'

Those who know the writings of the Arabs will at once recognize the sources of Adelard's lesson. Those who know the science of the West will at once realize its significance.

2. THE BEGINNINGS OF ORIENTALISM

We have seen how in the Middle Ages English scholars went to Spain and Sicily to learn from the Arabs and disseminate the knowledge thus acquired after their return to England. Now we turn to a new

development in Arabic studies—the appearance of what may be called the first Orientalists, in the modern sense of the word. In the years that intervened between the period we studied in our last talk and that which we shall consider now, great changes had taken place. Europe had progressed considerably in science and learning, and the Arabs had lost their early pre-eminence. It was, therefore, no longer necessary for European students to seek Arab teachers in order to acquire knowledge of general science. And so we find a new kind of Orientalism, the forerunner of modern Orientalist scholarship. The English scholar now studies Arabic, not for what the Arab scholar can teach him of philosophy and science, but for Arabic culture itself. For the first time Englishmen begin to make a serious study of the Arabic language and literature. Their work, like that of the modern Orientalists, was of use to Arabs as well as Franks, and it included the compiling of Arabic dictionaries and grammars, the editing and printing of Arabic manuscripts—long before they were printed in the East—research in Arab history and literature, and other activities of the same kind. This movement began in the seventeenth century. It was in this century that Professorships of Arabic were founded in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. English professors taught the Arabic language to numbers of eager students, and the first Arabic books were printed in England. We may examine in more detail a few of the individuals associated with this pioneering work.

The man generally known as the 'father of Arabic studies' in England was one William Bedwell (1561–1632). There is an interesting essay by him in which he stresses the importance of Arabic and the necessity of learning it. He mentions that it is 'the only language of religion and the chief language of diplomacy and business from the Fortunate Isles to the China Seas', and speaks at length of its great value for letters and science. Bedwell had some reputation in his day, and was famed all over Europe as an Arabist. His chief work was an Arabic lexicon in seven volumes, unfortunately not published. Among his printed works we may mention some Arabic texts, printed in England, studies on the Qur'ān, and a lexicon of Arabic words used in Western languages from Byzantine times to his own day.

Another distinguished figure is Edmund Castell (1606–85), one of the first Cambridge professors of Arabic. His life-work was a combined dictionary of the Semitic languages, which took him eighteen years to compile, and which was first published in 1669. The author

speaks in the preface of his 'eighteen years of unremitting toil of seldom less than 16 or 18 hours a day, with constant vigils, bodily suffering, and loss of fortune'. This dictionary, the first of its kind, was of very great importance, and was many times reprinted in England and Europe. Among Castell's other works we may mention an essay on the value of Arabic studies, a commentary on Ibn Sīnā, and a volume of original poems in Arabic, dedicated to King Charles II of England.

John Greaves (1602–52) was a famous mathematician, and was at one time Professor of Astronomy in Oxford. He travelled extensively in the Near East, especially in Egypt, and made a serious study of Arabic and Persian. He acquired a large collection of Arabic and Persian manuscripts, coins, and gems, and published a short Persian grammar. His chief interest, however, was in the mathematical literature of the Muslims, and he published a number of texts and studies on this subject. His brother, Thomas Greaves, also knew Arabic and Persian, and published a few essays. Among other seventeenth-century Arabists we may mention Abraham Wheelocke, the first Cambridge Professor of Arabic; Samuel Clarke, author of an essay on Arabic prosody and a vocabulary of Arabic place-names; Brian Walton, who published the Bible in many Oriental languages; and Dudley Loftus, an Irish scholar and jurist. John Selden (1584–1654), as jurist and statesman, played an important part in English life during this period: in addition to his other learning, he knew several Oriental languages, including Arabic. He edited and translated an Arabic historical text, and left behind him a large collection of Oriental manuscripts.

By far the greatest of these seventeenth-century Arabists was undoubtedly Edward Pococke (1604–91), the first occupant of the Arabic Chair in Oxford, and the first European Orientalist to do work of really first-rate importance. Pococke began to study Arabic at an early age, and was instructed by William Bedwell. He was also taught for a while at Oxford by Matthias Pasor, a refugee from persecution in Germany. In 1630 he went to Aleppo, where he spent five years. During that time he mastered both spoken and written Arabic, and acquired a fine collection of Arabic manuscripts which he took back with him to Oxford, thus saving them from the destruction which otherwise would probably have overtaken them. He formed many friendships among the Ḥalabīs, chief of them being one Sheikh Faṯḥallah, a learned scholar who taught him Arabic and remained his life-long friend.

In 1636, after his return to England, Pococke was appointed to the newly created Arabic Chair in Oxford, where he lectured on Arabic literature and grammar. It is related that all Bachelors were compelled to attend his lectures. The new Professor inaugurated his course with a lecture on the importance of the Arabic language and literature, and proceeded to give his first series of lectures on the sayings of 'Alī.

In 1637 he paid a second visit to the East, in order to obtain new knowledge and more manuscripts. Here he met again his old friend Fatḥallah. He returned to Oxford in 1641, and devoted the rest of his days to learned work in England. His second voyage was made in the company of John Greaves, the mathematician.

During his long years of residence in Oxford—where he sat in the shadow of the famous fig-tree which he had brought from Syria, and which still flourishes, the oldest in England—Pococke produced a large number of interesting works, of which the following may be cited.

1. *Specimen of the History of the Arabs.* An extract from the history of Abū'l Faraj, followed by a series of detailed studies on various aspects of Arab history, science, literature, and religion. This book is one of the most important in Orientalist literature, and was for long universally recognized as such. It was printed in Oxford in 1649, and reprinted in 1806.

2. *Lāmīyat al-'Ajam.* A critical edition of the classical Arabic poem of Ṭughrā'ī, accompanied by a translation, and very full explanatory notes. Printed in Oxford in 1661.

3. *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī-d-Duwal.* The full Arabic text of the history of Abū'l Faraj with a translation.

The life and work of Pococke mark an epoch in European Oriental studies. His reputation in his own day was immense, and all subsequent scholars are greatly indebted to him. From all over Europe and the East scholars wrote to him for help and advice, and numerous students, from many countries, and even from as far away as Roumania, came to Oxford to study Arabic under the greatest master of it then living in Europe. The only other Arabist in Europe of anything like similar stature, the Dutchman Golius, Professor of Arabic in Leyden University, himself described Pococke as without rival in Oriental learning. Besides the above-mentioned books he left a number of other studies, and a collection of 420 manuscripts which were acquired by the

Bodleian Library in Oxford after his death, and have remained there ever since. They form a valuable part of the Arabic section of the Library.

He left behind him six sons, of whom the eldest, also called Edward Pococke (1648–1727) followed in his father's footsteps and took up Oriental studies. His published works include an incomplete edition and translation of 'Abd al-Laṭīf's history of Egypt, and a translation of an Arabic philosophic classic by Ibn Ṭufail.

The seventeenth century was thus a period of great development in the history of Arabic learning in England. The new interest in Oriental studies may be traced to several sources. An important motive was undoubtedly the theological one. It was realized at this time that Arabic and Hebrew were closely related, and it was hoped that the study of Arabic would throw a new light on the Old Testament. Even more important was the increasing awareness of the general cultural importance of Arabic and Arab history. The preceding century had witnessed a revival of learning in Europe in the widest sense, including a new interest in classical languages and studies. It was natural that students of human history and civilization should realize the immense significance of the Arabic world in the annals of mankind, and should attempt to extend their knowledge of it. Bedwell, Castell, and Pococke all wrote essays on the general importance of Arabic, and the need for its study by men of serious scholarship. Finally we may note the renewal of commercial and diplomatic contacts between England and the Near East, and the new interests and opportunities thus offered. It was this that made it possible for Pococke to make his two fruitful visits to the Orient. The new interest was widespread, and no less a person than Archbishop Laud devoted much care to the furtherance of Arabic studies in England, and endowed the first Chair of Arabic at Oxford.

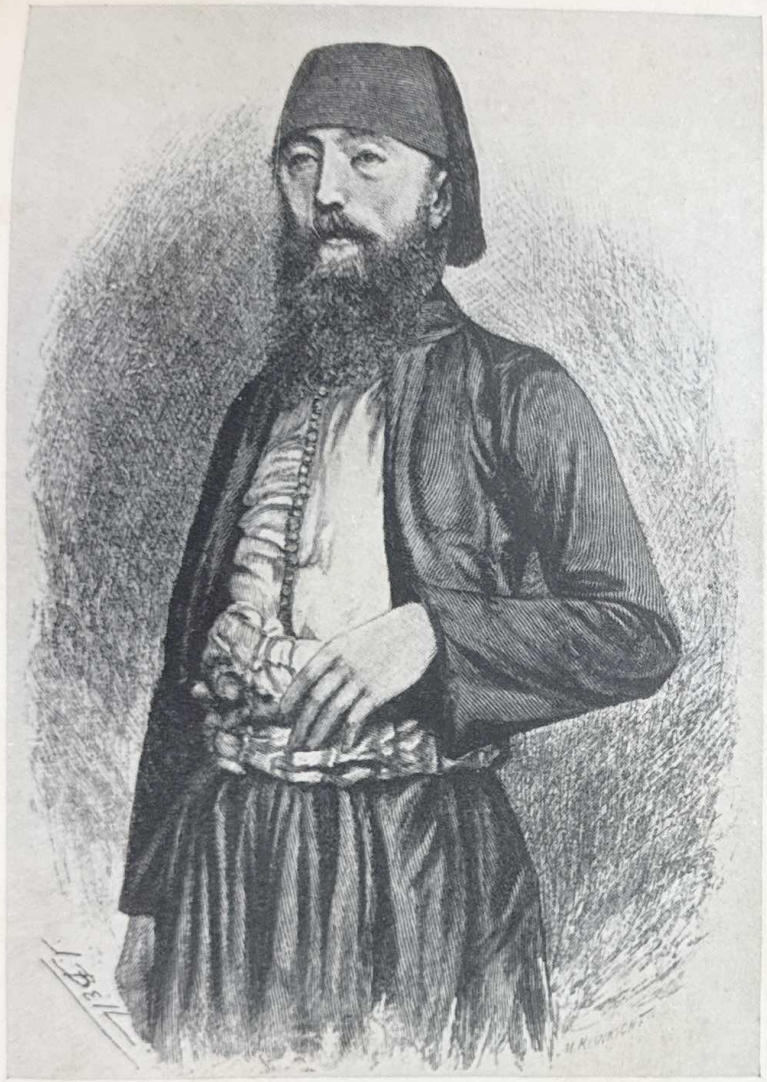
The balance of the seventeenth century, despite the disturbance of civil war, is thus remarkable. Centres of Arabic studies were created in Oxford and Cambridge, a large number of books were published, and a new science was created which, in the following century, produced a whole series of distinguished scholars whose work enriched the cultural inheritance both of the Arabs and of Europe. But of these we shall speak later.

3. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

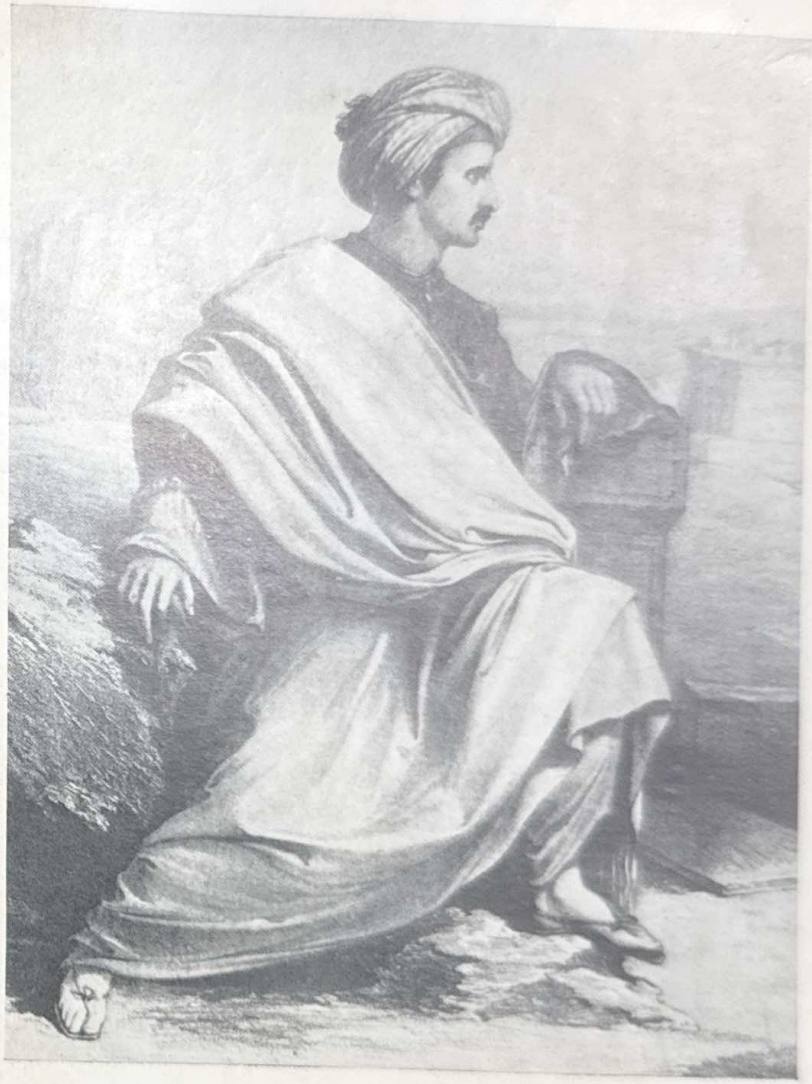
The seeds of Oriental learning that had been sown in seventeenth-century England bore abundant fruit in the years that followed. Early in the eighteenth century two new professorships of Arabic were founded in Oxford and Cambridge, so that the two most ancient English Universities now had no less than two Chairs of Arabic each. The list of distinguished English Arabists in this period is too long for us to be able to consider them individually, and we can do no more than mention the names of eighteenth-century scholars like Hunt, White, Hyde, Gagnier, Browne, Wallis, and Ford, all of whom were famed in their day as teachers and research-workers. Humphrey Prideaux (1648–1724), the author of a biography of the Prophet; Leonard Chappelow (1683–1768), author of an Arabic grammar and translator into English of the *Lāmīyat al-'Ajam* and of that most difficult masterpiece of Arabic literature, the *Maqāmāt* of Ḥarīrī, and Carlyle, who learnt Arabic from a Baghdādī traveller in Cambridge and translated many Arabic poems into English, are worthy of special notice.

There are four, however, among the English Arabists of the eighteenth century whose work is of particular importance, in that it forms part of the main heritage of English culture, and exercised great influence on English men of letters generally.

The first of these was Simon Ockley (1678–1720), who studied Arabic in both Cambridge and Oxford, and was noted even in his youth as a student of unusual brilliance. He was a pupil of the Oxford Arabist Edward Pococke, of whom we have already spoken, and in the preface of one of his books Ockley speaks with great respect of his teacher 'the learned and reverent Dr. Pococke, the glory and ornament of our age and nation, whose memory I much reverence'. Ockley, who eventually became Professor of Arabic in Cambridge, was passionately devoted to Arabic learning and indeed reduced himself and his numerous progeny to dire poverty through his neglect of material things. Despite many privations and personal difficulties, Ockley carried on his work, never flagging in his efforts. Besides a general introduction to the study of Oriental languages, and an English translation of *Ḥayy b. Yaqẓān* by Ibn Ṭufail, Ockley's chief work is a cultural and political history of Islam, in English, in three volumes. This work represents the first attempt ever made to present to the English reader,



Edward H. Palmer



E. W. Lane

كتاب الكاف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم مع الباء

باب الكاف مع الباء

قوله عز وجل فكبكبوا فيها اي دهوروا والبقية بعضهم على بعض وقيل جمعوا ماخوذ من الكبكبة وهي الجماعة وفي الحديث كبكبة من بني اسرائيل اي جماعة ويقال كبته لوجهه فاكب ومنه قوله تعالى فكبت وجوههم في النار وقوله تعالى لمن يشاء مكبا اهدى وفي حديث ابن رميلة فاكبوا رواحلهم على الطريق هكذا الرواية والصواب كبوا والمعنى ألزموها الطريق والرجل يكب على عمل اذا لزمه ومنه قول عمة قدح الدهر على الزناد الاجذم يعني الذي لزمه فهو يعالجه قوله تعالى كبوا كما كبت الذين من قبلهم اي ادلوا واخزوا يقال كبته لوجهه اي صرعه وقيل في قوله كبوا اي غيظوا والكبت والكبد شدة الغيظ وقوله تعالى او يكبتهم قال ابو عبيدة معناه او يهزمهم وقيل او يخزيهم والمكبوت الخزين ومنه حديث انه راى طلحة حزينا مكبوتا وقيل الاصل فيه مكبود اي بلغ الهم كبده فقلبت التاء الفا لقرب مخرجيهما كما قالوا سبت راسه وسبده اي حلقه في الحديث كنا معه بمر الظهران نجني الكباث يعني النضيج من ثمر الاراك قوله عز وجل لقد خلقنا الانسان في كبد اي كابد امره في الدنيا والآخرة وقيل خلق منتصبا غير مجنح كسائر الحيوان وقال ابن عرفة في كبد في ضيق وانشد للبيد ماعن حلا بكبت ارمدا ثمنا وقام الخصوم في كبد والانسان في بطن امه في ضيق ثم يكابد ما يكابده من امر دنياه والآخرة ثم الموت الى ان يستقر في جنة او في نار وفلان كابد معيشته اي يتحمل منها ضيقا وشدة وفي الحديث كبد هم البرد اي شق عليهم وضيق وكبد كل شيء وسطه وفي الحديث فوضع يده على كبدي اي على جنبي من الطعام مما يلي الكبد وفي الحديث وتلقي الارض افلاذ كبدها اي تلفظ ما حوت في بطنها من الكنوز وهي كبد الارض وقيل تريد ما في بطنها من معادن الذهب والفضة قوله تعالى وكذلك جعلنا في كل قرية اكابر مجرميها اي جعلنا مجرميها اكابر لان الرياسة والدعة ادعى لهم الى الكفر وقوله تعالى وتكون لهما الكبرياء في الارض اي العظمة والملك وقوله تعالى فلما راينه اكبرنه اي اعظمنه وقوله تعالى كبرت كلمة اي كبرت مقالتهم اتخاذ الله ولدا كلمة ونصبه على التمييز وقوله تعالى والذي تولى كبره اي معظم الافك وقال الليث الكبر الاثم اسم للكبيرة كالخطء من الخطيئة وقوله تعالى انها لاحدى الكبر اي احدى العظائم وهي النار نعوذ بالله منها وفي حديث ابي هريرة تجدا حد الاكبرين اذا التمانشقت يريد ابا بكر وعمر قال شمر الكبير يكون في الفضل والسن والعلم وقالوا في تفسير قوله تعالى انه لكبيركم اي معلمكم وقيل في تفسير قوله تعالى فالكبيرهم كان اكبرهم في العقل لا في السن وفي حديث عبد الله بن زيد الذي ابي الندا انه اخذ عودا في منامه ليتخذ منه كبرا قال شمر الكبر الطبل

على وجهه هو

وقال

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A folio from *Kitāb al-Gharībain* in a professional copyist's hand. Written at Walwālij in Badakhshān; dated mid-Safar 510/June–July 1116 (*Reduced*)

in popular and understandable form, a general account of the achievements of Arab civilization. Whereas the Arabists of the previous generation had been a select few, whose work was only known to specialists, Ockley for the first time presented the results of Orientalist research to the wider English reading public, which thus learnt something of the achievements of the Islamic world. Ockley's history, though in many respects inaccurate and out of date in view of modern research, was in its own day a remarkable effort, and was much appreciated by European scholars and historians generally, not least among them being the great English historian Gibbon, author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It also acquired for its author a permanent place in English letters.

Another notable figure of the age is George Sale (1697–1736), whose interest in Islam was such that Gibbon, of whom we have already spoken, described him as 'half a Muslim'. Though this statement is perhaps exaggerated, it gives some idea of the impression Sale made on his contemporaries. Sale was a lawyer who studied Arabic in his spare time, and acquired a large collection of Arabic manuscripts. His chief work, for which he is best remembered, is his English translation of the Qur'ān, published in 1734. This was the first complete translation ever made in a European language, and Muslims will recognize readily the magnitude of the undertaking. So successful was Sale in this arduous and difficult task, that to this day many experts consider his translation to be the best available. It has been reprinted on numerous occasions and is still much used at the present day. Translations of the Qur'ān in French, German, and Polish were made from Sale's English version.

Our author did not confine himself to a bare translation, though that in itself was a task demanding great scholarship. His translation is equipped with very full notes and explanations making clear to the English reader many passages which would otherwise have been obscure to him, and with a detailed introduction, which is in reality a monograph on the Islamic religion generally.

Sale's translation was much used by eighteenth-century men of letters, for whom it was a unique source of information on the Holy Book of Islam and on the founder of the faith. It was studied extensively on the Continent, and Voltaire quotes it in his *Philosophic Dictionary*.

Among Sale's other writings we may mention his collaboration in

Bayle's encyclopaedia, the first modern European encyclopaedia, to which he contributed all the articles on Arab subjects.

Our third scholar is Sir William Jones (1746–94). Jones is better known as an Indianist than as an Arabist, and was indeed the father of Indian studies in Europe. The expansion of Europe in the farther East caused a great growth of interest in England and France in things Indian, and led to a burst of scholarly activity. English scholars in India and England studied Sanskrit texts and compiled Sanskrit grammars, and opened a new field of Oriental learning which in the following century was developed in Germany and elsewhere. Foremost among these was Sir William Jones. Although his main work was on India, he was also an Arabist of some ability, and indeed took up Arabic long before Sanskrit. It was perhaps partly his interest in Arabic and Islam that led him to go to India. He was attracted to Arabic while yet a school-boy, and took private lessons. At Oxford he studied Arabic and Persian and brought a Syrian Muslim to that city to be his tutor. His chief publication of Arabic interest is a full English translation of the *Mu'allaqāt*, the seven 'hanging poems' of pre-Islamic Arabic. Jones rendered a great service to English readers in offering them these gems of ancient Arabic literature. While in India he found time to publish several works on Islamic law, as well as a whole series of studies on Indian subjects.

Finally, we may glance very briefly at the career of J. L. Burckhardt (1784–1817). Burckhardt was of Swiss origin, educated and naturalized in England. After some years' study in European universities he went to Aleppo, where he stayed long enough to acquire a mastery of the Arabic language. He spent most of his life travelling in Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, and, under the special protection of Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha, succeeded in paying a visit to Mecca. His chief works are his records of his travels in the Near East. His book *Bedouins and Wahhabis*, which was based on first-hand experience, gives an accurate and detailed account of that most important movement, which had then just passed the zenith of its first period of power and expansion. He also produced a large collection of Arabic proverbs, gathered by him during his travels, of which he published the Arabic text with an English translation and commentary. His books were widely read and appreciated, and were translated from English into other European languages. He died in Egypt in 1817.

The latter part of the eighteenth century was a period of great

interest in Oriental civilization in the West. The growth of European influence in Asia, and the numerous translations made from Arabic and Persian by the scholars we have named, as well as many others, brought Arabic literature to the notice of most Englishmen of letters. The first European translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*, which appeared at the beginning of the century, also made a deep impression. The result was a wave of Orientalism in European literature. English poets and writers began to produce tales on Oriental themes, in imitation of Arabic and Persian originals. The movement spread to the Continent, where it influenced the Romantic revival, and the German poet Goethe was much affected by English and French translations of Oriental works.

At the end of the eighteenth century the French, under Napoleon, invaded Egypt, thus entering into direct contact with a country of Arab culture. This, and the emergence in the years that followed of a strong and virtually independent Egypt under Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha, playing an important role in European politics, gave a new impetus to Arabic studies.

4. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

During the nineteenth century Arabic studies made great progress in all the chief countries in Europe. The Egyptian expedition of Napoleon had as one of its consequences the entry of the Arab Near East into the forefront of European politics, and the restoration, after several centuries, of direct contact between the Arabs and the Franks. Many European travellers began to visit the East, and an ever increasing number of Egyptian students entered the universities of Western Europe, studying the culture and technique of the West, and arousing a new interest in Arabic culture among the Westerners. The new scientific movement in European Orientalism was begun by the French scholars who accompanied Napoleon, and French scholars are among the most distinguished Arabists of the early nineteenth century. Silvestre de Sacy, the greatest of French Arabists, trained a whole generation of scholars of every nationality.

In England, too, we find an imposing array of Arabists. A new Chair of Arabic was set up in the newly founded University of London, and the creation of the Royal Asiatic Society, the association of English Orientalists, gave a new impetus to Oriental learning. English scholars

in India, studying the languages and civilization of the Indian Muslims, found that their researches led them inevitably to the study of Arabic, the source of all Muslim culture in whatever language. The work of the nineteenth-century Arabists also acquired, as a result of developments among the Arabs themselves, a new value and significance. During the nineteenth century the Arabic-speaking peoples entered upon a period of cultural and national renascence. In this they were much hindered in the beginning by the lack of printed books in Arabic, and even of printing-presses. The many excellent editions of Arabic classics published in Europe, many of them in England, were thus of great value to the new generation of Arab readers, and provided material that could not be obtained elsewhere. Later, when printing presses were set up in the East, and local editions printed, they were often based on the European texts. The Orientalists thus came to play an important part in restoring to the Arabs their own culture. The debt owed to the medieval Arabs who had brought Greek books to the West was being repayed.

In the space at our disposal we can do no more than notice a few of the most outstanding figures among the many English Arabists of the period. We can but mention men like J. H. Hindley, an accomplished scholar in Persian and Arabic, whose works include a biography and study, in English, of the Arab poet Abū Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, and M. Lumsden, who was Professor of Arabic and Persian at Fort William College, in India, and who compiled a grammar of Arabic that was much used in the nineteenth century, in both Europe and India. It should be noted that the first English efforts to organize education in India included provision for the study of Arabic by Indian Muslims, and Lumsden was one of the many Englishmen who helped in this. Fort William, the first English college in India, had two Chairs of Arabic and Persian.

By far the greatest figure in England, and perhaps in Europe, in the early nineteenth century was E. W. Lane (1801–76). At an early age Lane conceived a passionate interest in Oriental studies and particularly in Egypt. In July 1825 he set sail for Alexandria, on his first visit to Egypt. Travel in the Mediterranean was still dangerous in those days, and his journey was not without peril. On one occasion the ship was caught in a hurricane. The master was incapacitated and no one else on board knew anything of navigation. Lane, though he had never before steered a ship, assumed the helm, and, thanks to his

knowledge of mathematics, saved her from destruction. Later in the voyage a mutiny endangered his life. After two months' travel Lane landed in Egypt, where he stayed until the autumn of 1828. He spent most of his time in Cairo. Though his original intention was to study the ancient Egyptians, he soon found their modern descendants far more interesting. From the very beginning of his stay he began an intensive study of Arabic, and rapidly acquired an excellent knowledge of both the written and spoken languages. This first visit to the Orient, to which he had so long been attracted, was, for him, a great moral experience. He says in his diaries: 'On my first landing I was filled with emotion, like an Eastern bridegroom about to lift the veil of his as yet unseen bride.' Lane was greatly impressed by what he saw, and conceived a great admiration for things Islamic.

By the time of his return to England he had made an exhaustive study of Egypt, its people and their language, and had compiled a detailed description, in manuscript, of Egyptian life. Back in England, he was asked to publish an account of what he had seen, and with a zeal for scientific accuracy that was characteristic of all his work he insisted on making a second trip to Egypt before publishing his book. His second visit was in 1833–5 and was devoted to a close study of the life of Cairo. It was his habit when in Egypt to wear only the kind of clothes worn by Egyptians, and to keep exclusively Egyptian, Muslim company. He occupied a house of his own in Cairo, and lived in every way the life of an Egyptian gentleman of letters. These things, coupled with the fluency and correctness of his Arabic and the somewhat Eastern cast of his features, enabled him to live as an Egyptian among Egyptians, and to mix on equal and friendly terms with Cairo society. He was known in Egypt as Mansūr Effendi.

On his return for the second time to England he published his now famous book *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, in two volumes (1836). This work was at once accepted as a masterpiece. The first edition sold out in two weeks, and many others followed. It was reprinted in Germany and America, and ranks as an English classic. The book contains a description of Cairene life and customs just before those changes took place which transformed Cairo into a modern city, and thus preserves a faithful record, with remarkable accuracy of detail, of an almost vanished age. It is an historical document of the first importance, and is still indispensable to all students of Egypt.

In the years immediately following his return Lane devoted himself to preparing an English translation of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Earlier translations had appeared, and enjoyed great popularity. They were, however, inaccurate and unscientific, and Lane set himself the task of making a translation which would retain at once the meaning and atmosphere of the original. His translation was accompanied by detailed explanatory notes on medieval Islamic customs, which were afterwards reprinted separately under the title *Arabian Life in the Middle Ages*.

Meanwhile, for some time, Lane had had the idea of compiling a comprehensive Arabic-English dictionary. The early European dictionaries of Arabic, by Golius, Freytag, and others, were useful in their way, but based on inadequate materials and in innumerable respects incomplete. Lane's idea was to work systematically through the classical Arabic dictionaries—*Tāj al-'Arūs* and others, and on that basis to compile his own lexicon. In July 1842 he set out on his third visit to Egypt with that end in mind. From 1842 to 1844 he worked in Cairo, usually from 12 to 14 hours a day, rarely leaving his house. At last, when he had gathered all the necessary material from the Arabic dictionaries—then, it should be remembered, still unpublished and difficult of access—he returned to England, and devoted the remaining twenty-five years of his life to the completion of his lexicon. The task was enormous. The study of the Arabic dictionaries, though in itself a considerable undertaking, was only a beginning. There remained the task of sifting, arranging, classifying—in a word, the difficult and critical work of making an ordered and methodical lexicon in the European style out of the chaotic mass of material at his disposal. By the date of his death, in 1876, the task was not quite finished. But the many volumes of his lexicon that were published form an invaluable contribution to Oriental learning, and are universally recognized as an indispensable part of the equipment of every serious Arabic student. From that day to this Lane's lexicon remains the best available, and has been the basis of most later Arabic dictionaries in European languages.

Toward the end of his lifetime Lane was recognized everywhere as the 'Grand Master of Arabic Studies', to quote a letter written to him by a distinguished German Arabist. He was honoured by learned societies in many European capitals.

One of the best remembered English scholars of the nineteenth

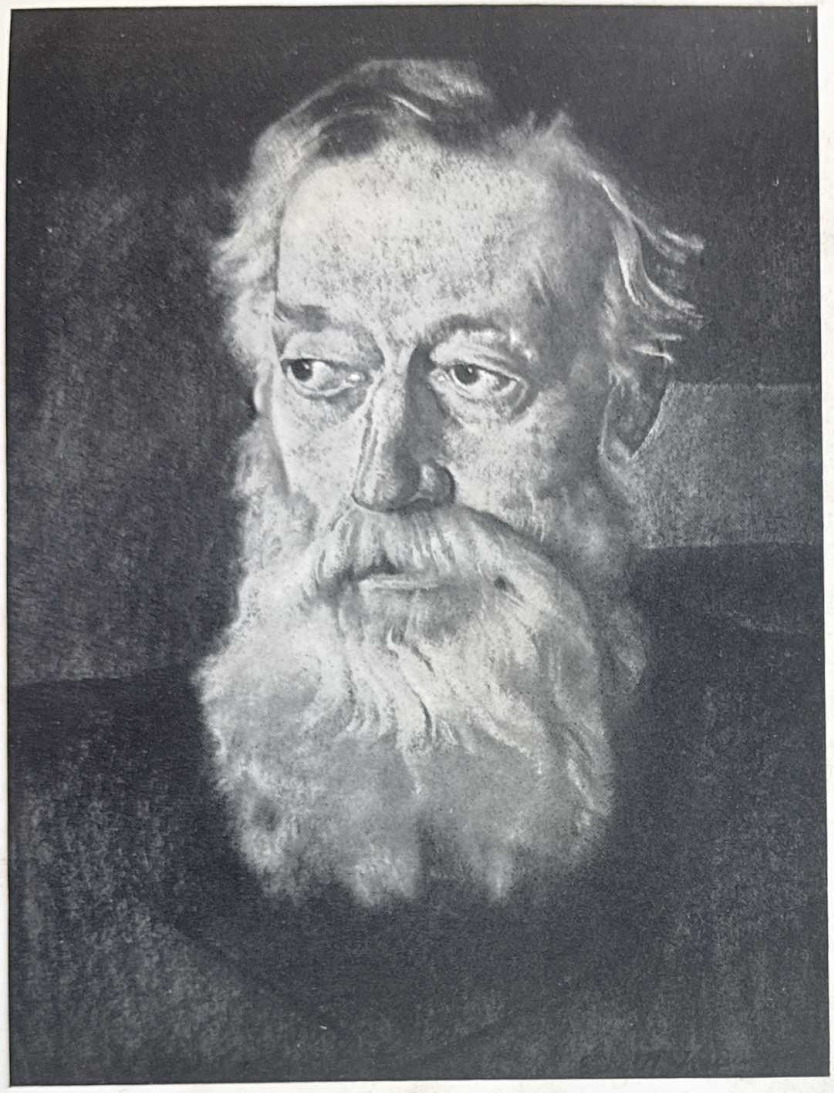
century is Edward Henry Palmer, perhaps better known in the East as Sheikh 'Abdallah. Palmer was born in Cambridge in 1840 and died in Egypt in 1882—the year of the revolt of 'Orābī Pasha. Already as a child he showed a remarkable aptitude for languages and acquired a fluent knowledge of French and Italian. At the age of 20 he made the acquaintance of a certain Sayyid 'Abdallah, an Indian Muslim who was then lecturer in Hindustani in the University of Cambridge. It was from Sayyid 'Abdallah that he acquired his first interest in Oriental studies. With characteristic energy he undertook simultaneously the study of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu and before long was translating English poetry into Arabic, 'my favourite language', and was actually writing original Arabic verse. Palmer soon decided that the best way to learn Arabic was from Arabs, and we find him in close contact with several members of the Arab community in England. One of these, a Syrian from Aleppo, named Rizqallah Ḥassūn al-Ḥalabī, came to be a very intimate friend of his and exercised considerable influence on Palmer's writings and character. Rizqallah taught Palmer a great deal, and was greatly respected by him. Shortly afterwards Palmer entered the University of Cambridge and pursued his Oriental studies in a more systematic manner. It was for long one of his ambitions to visit the Arab lands and make the personal acquaintance of the nation whose language and literature he so much admired. In 1869 an opportunity at last presented itself, and in that and the following year Palmer made two journeys to the Near East on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Society. This gave him his first opportunity to make a more detailed study of Arabic dialects and culture—an opportunity which he exploited to the full. Some time after his return to England he was appointed to a professorship of Arabic in Cambridge. For some years he divided his time between academic and journalistic work and produced a number of important books. In 1882 he visited Egypt once more and made an adventurous journey on horseback through the Sinai Peninsula, a region which he knew well from his previous explorations. The ride of Sheikh 'Abdallah through the desert has become almost legendary. His end was tragic. The time was one of many troubles in the Near East and the journey therefore far more than usually dangerous. On his return journey through the desert Palmer was murdered by marauding Bedouins and a brilliant career was thus cut off at the early age of 42.

Palmer is perhaps unique among European Orientalists in that he did

not merely acquire a formal academic knowledge of Arabic, but entered into the very spirit of the Arabic nation and language. He was one of the very few Europeans who were able to write fluently and correctly in Oriental languages and some of his writings in Urdu were printed and widely acclaimed in India. His account in Urdu of the visit of the Persian Shah to England is considered a classic. He wrote original poetry and prose in Persian and Arabic too. It is interesting to note that even in writing private letters in English to his fellow Arabists, he often found that he could not express himself adequately in English and would break into Arabic. One of his colleagues and friends, G. F. Nicholl, Professor of Arabic at Oxford, has written 'in the English letters he wrote to me Palmer often seemed ill at ease. He would, under the influence of sudden emotion, or for the purpose of criticism, burst into Arabic or Persian prose or verse.' The following may be quoted as a specimen of Palmer's original Arabic verse:

لیت شِعری هل کفی ما قد جری
مذ جری ما قد کفی من مُقْلَتَیّ
قد بری اعظمُ حزنٍ اعظمی
وفنی جسمی حاشا اصغَرَیّ

Despite the shortness of his life Palmer left behind him an imposing list of published works of which the following are perhaps the most important. Shortly before his death he published a critical edition of the full Arabic text of the poetic works of Bahā ad-Dīn Zuhair of Egypt, together with a metrical translation into English, notes, and an introduction. This publication marked an important step in the recovery of the cultural heritage of the Arabs. In the following year he published a grammar of the Arabic language in English. Unlike previous works on the subject it was arranged in the traditional manner of the Arab grammarians and tried to present Arabic grammar to English students in the form in which it was studied by the Arabs themselves. This work appeared in a second enlarged edition in the year preceding his death. Rather lighter in character was a biography of Hārūn al-Rashīd, in which Palmer paints a colourful picture of the 'Abbāsid capital in the days of the most famous of the Caliphs. He also published a number of verse translations from Arabic and Persian, a Persian dictionary, a critical catalogue of Oriental manuscripts in



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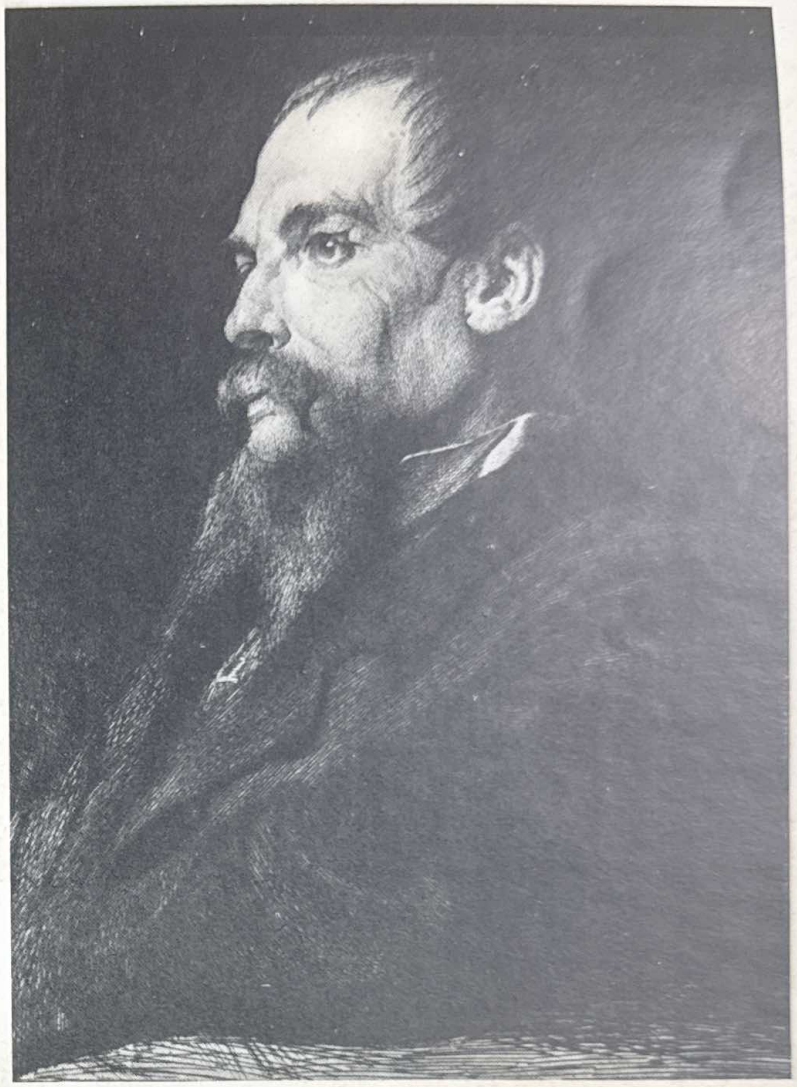
Charles M. Doughty



Sir Richard Burton

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Cambridge, and an account of his travels in the Sinai Peninsula. His death was mourned by his many friends and admirers all over the world, and elegiac poems were published in no less than fifteen languages, including Arabic.

Another scholar of first-rate importance was William Wright (1840–89). Wright was the son of a British officer in India and was born in that country. His mother was herself expert in several Oriental languages and encouraged her son at an early age to take up Oriental studies. He studied Arabic in English and European universities and worked for a while in Leyden under the great Dutch Orientalist Reinhart Dozy. He was successively Professor of Arabic in London, Dublin, and Cambridge. Already at the age of 22 in a letter to a friend he drew up a plan for a life of work and study devoted to Arabic. The plan was an ambitious one, and it is remarkable to what an extent Wright succeeded in fulfilling it in the years that followed. Two of his major contributions to Arabic literature are his edition of the travels of Ibn Jubair and of the famous *Kāmil* of Mubarrad. He collaborated with Dozy in the edition of the history of Spain of al-Maqqarī and also published a number of other Arabic texts. His Arabic grammar in two volumes is still one of the best available, and is used by all advanced students in English-speaking countries.

Wright's successor in the Arabic Chair in Cambridge was Robertson Smith (1846–94), a Scot from Aberdeen who studied Arabic in the University of his native town and on the Continent. He early acquired a reputation, and in 1881 a group of his admirers made a public presentation to him in Edinburgh of a collection of Arabic books and manuscripts as a token of esteem. From 1879 to 1881 he paid a number of visits to the Near East and travelled widely in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and even Arabia, where he penetrated to Jedda and Taif. His published works include studies on *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* and other aspects of pre-Islamic Arab history. He was editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and claimed to be the only man to have read it right through. He was a man of amazingly wide learning and was constantly astounding his friends by the depth and detail of his knowledge on all kinds of subjects. It is said that while semi-conscious and on his death-bed he gave a full-length lecture on medieval English history.

Finally we may mention Sir William Muir (1819–1905), a Scottish Arabist with a distinguished career as an administrator in India and

as a scholar in Edinburgh University. He published a number of works in English on Muḥammad and on Islamic history. Several of these are still used as text-books in English and Indian universities. Of particular interest is his full-length biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, a work remarkably free from prejudice. His history of the Caliphate, based on Arabic sources, including many then in manuscript, is still the best work on the subject in English.

5. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

So far we have dealt in the main with persons of an academic character. We may now turn aside for a moment and glance at the lives of three Englishmen whose interest in Arabic and in the Arab lands sprang from other causes, and whose life-work took a different form from those we have already studied. The first and most famous of these was Sir Richard Burton (1821–90). Although he began to study Arabic while yet at Oxford, he left the University before completing his course, and went to India to serve in the British Army. There he lived for some years, mainly in Muslim districts, and studied Arabic, Persian, and other Islamic languages under Muslim teachers. On his return to England he published four books on India. In 1853 he paid his first visit to Egypt. From Cairo he set out on camel-back for Suez and after an eventful journey embarked from that port on a pilgrim ship bound for Yanbū'. From Yanbū' he struck out across the Ḥijāz to visit Medina and Mecca. He returned to England via Jedda and Egypt. On his return he published an account of his travels in three volumes, which ran through many editions and is still much esteemed as a source of information on the countries he describes. Many years of wandering followed.

On one occasion he set out on a journey of discovery in the wild country of East Africa and Abyssinia, disguised as an Arab merchant, and on his return brought much valuable information concerning those little-known regions. In later years he explored central and west Africa, and the lesser known regions of the Americas. In 1855 we find him in the Crimea serving with the British forces. During 1869–71 he was in Damascus and explored Syria in the company of his wife and of Edward Henry Palmer. Both he and his wife published descriptions of that country. Six years later he was back in Egypt conducting geological surveys in what were then the wilder parts of the country.

His life was thus one of constant danger and adventure, and most of it was spent in travel and exploration in the far-flung corners of the earth. Nevertheless he found time to publish a number of books, of some of which we have already spoken. Others include a full translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*, which is unique among European translations in its faithful adherence to the original, and which on that account occasioned a minor scandal among his more prudish contemporaries.

Another well-known English traveller in the Near East is Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840–1922). Blunt began his life as a diplomat. At an early age, however, he developed a passionate interest in the causes of the oppressed peoples of the earth, and devoted the remainder of his days to pleading for their rights. He was particularly interested in India, Ireland, and Egypt. He was a great traveller and visited many countries. Accompanied by his wife, he toured the Arab lands of the Near East and of north Africa. In 1878 he visited the Najd. The travellers were well received at Hail by the Emir, who presented them with some of his choicest brood mares, and gave them a safe conduct to Baghdad. During his visits to India and Egypt he entered into close contact with the Nationalist leaders, and was well-known to both Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī and ʿOrābī Pasha. He published several books in support of the Egyptian cause, and in 1881 settled down in a house of his own near Cairo where he lived the life of an Egyptian, wearing Egyptian clothes and speaking only Arabic.

His wife, Lady Anne Blunt, was an accomplished Arabist, besides being an expert rider and traveller. Her published works include a book on Iraq, another on Najd, and an English translation of the *Muʿallaqāt*, which was rendered into English verse by her husband.

The third of our travellers is Charles Doughty (1843–1926), who is chiefly remembered for his classic work on Arabia Deserta. After a year of preparation in Damascus, devoted to an intensive study of Arabic, Doughty set out on a journey of investigation in central Arabia. Unlike many of his predecessors he disdained to conceal his nationality or religion, and travelled everywhere as an Englishman and a Christian. This courageous stubbornness did not lessen the dangers and privations of the journey. The publication of his book on his return to England in 1878 was of importance in the growth of our knowledge of Arabia. His record of his travels contains a wealth of knowledge on the geography and geology of the country, much of

which had hitherto been completely unknown. Hardly less useful were his observations on the life and habits of the people he encountered. A new edition of his book was published some twenty years ago with a preface by Lawrence of Arabia.

We may now return to the Arabic scholars of the universities. The early years of the twentieth century revealed a standard of Arabic scholarship in no way inferior to that of the greatest days of the nineteenth century. New departments of Arabic were created in Scottish and provincial universities. During the last war the University of London set up a new college devoted entirely to Oriental learning, the School of Oriental Studies.

The scholars of whom we shall speak now are so recent that they are still remembered with affection by their students and colleagues in England and in the Orient. Sir Thomas Arnold, whose death took place in 1930, was the first occupant of the Chair of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental Studies in London. He was educated in Cambridge and spent many years in India as teacher of philosophy at the Muslim college of Aligarh. His best known work is the *Preaching of Islam*, an account of the propagation of the Islamic faith, which brought him immediate recognition, and was translated into Turkish and Urdu. In another book, *The Caliphate*, he traces the history of that institution through the ages and discusses it from the legal and philosophic viewpoints. He also published a number of valuable studies on Islamic art and painting, a subject to which he devoted many years of his life. In 1930 he went to Cairo as visiting Professor and died shortly after.

Another Orientalist of distinction was Guy Le Strange, who died in 1934. The keynote of his work is to be found in the following quotation: 'If Muslim history is ever to be made interesting and indeed to be rightly understood, the historical geography of the Middle Ages must be thoroughly worked out.' Le Strange devoted the best years of his life to the study of Arabic and Persian geographical literature. Three of his books, *Baghdad during the 'Abbasid Caliphate*, *Palestine under the Moslems*, and *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, are recognized as standard works. He also published a number of geographical texts and numerous shorter studies. From 1912 onwards he was almost blind, but even this serious disability did not prevent him from continuing his work.

A famous Cambridge Arabist who died in the same year as Le Strange

was A. A. Bevan, a student of William Wright. His chief work was on early Arabic poetry, and he was responsible for the standard editions of the *Naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and Farazdaq. The following anecdote will give some idea of his scrupulous accuracy. His colleague E. G. Browne, the well-known Persian scholar, relates that on one occasion Bevan came to see him, looking so sad that Browne feared that a serious calamity had taken place. What had actually happened was that Bevan had discovered a slight metrical flaw in one line of his edition of the *Naqā'iḍ*.

We have not enough time at our disposal to speak of the many other scholars of the period—of Lyall, the editor of the *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*; Lane-Poole, author of numerous works on Muslim history and numismatics; Amedroz, editor of several important Arabic historical texts; and many others. One scholar, however, deserves more than a passing mention, if only because his death took place only a few months ago. D. S. Margoliouth was Professor of Arabic in Oxford for many years and was for long recognized as the leading Arabic scholar in England. He was a member of the Arab Academy of Damascus and his learning was generally recognized in the Orient. Although he published a number of studies in English on Islamic history and religion, he will be best remembered for his numerous editions and translations of Arabic classics. Perhaps the best known of these is his masterly edition of the *Dictionary of Learned Men* of Yāqūt. Others include the letters of Abū'l-'Alā, the table talk of Tanūkhī, and the chronicle of Miskawaih.

Of those who are yet with us it is too early to speak. Scholars like Nicholson, Gibb, Storey, and many others are producing important works of which only future generations will be able to give a critical account. Meanwhile it may be said with confidence that the long tradition of Arabic learning in England, the evolution of which we have traced through the centuries, is still very much alive. May it continue to flourish!

BRITISH LIFE AND THOUGHT

This series of eleven illustrated booklets, specially written by acknowledged experts, has now been issued in a bound volume entitled 'British Life and Thought', price 8*s.* 6*d.* It contains additional photographs, a coloured folding-map of the British Empire, a complete index, and a note on book lists. The booklets themselves are still available separately, price 1*s.*; each is complete in itself, and together they provide a unique account of the life and work, the ideas and ideals of Britain to-day. The English reader will find them both stimulating and informative. For the foreign reader who has never visited Britain they are the best substitute for such a visit, and they will go far to explain to him how life is lived in this country, how the British Commonwealth of Nations is organized, and the spirit and method of British institutions.

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